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The situation in the Middle East

Measures to eliminate international terrorism

Security Council
Fifty-eighth year

Note verbale dated 12 February 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

The Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations presents his compliments to the Secretary-General and to the President of the Security Council and has the honour to transmit herewith a reply to the Israeli allegations contained in document A/57/717-S/2003/96 (see annex).

It would be appreciated if the text of the present note and its annex were circulated as a document of the fifty-seventh session of the General Assembly, under agenda items 160 and 36, and of the Security Council.

New York, 12 February 2003

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Annex

Letter dated 12 February 2003 from the Permanent Representative of the Syrian Arab Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to address this letter to you in order to establish certain facts and to respond to the Israeli allegations contained in document A/57/717-S/2003/96 dated 27 January 2003.

Israel, which was established against a background of terrorism and which has continued to practise terrorism since the 1940s, has no right to accuse others of supporting or resorting to terrorism. All are aware that Israel has committed terrorist acts in several capitals and other cities in Europe, Africa and Asia, and in certain Arab countries. The names of the perpetrators and victims of such terrorism are known by all, whether the murder of Count Bernadotte or the massacres at Qibia, Deir Yassin, Qana, Jenin and Gaza. This is attested by the fact that a number of Israeli leaders and military officials were summoned before the courts on charges of genocide.

In the last two years alone, Israel has deliberately killed more than 2,160 innocent Palestinian children and civilians. Observers following developments in the Middle East know full well that the murders and acts of destruction perpetrated by Israel are part of a deliberate policy and ongoing process whose goal is to kill all hopes of establishing a just and comprehensive peace in the region, break the will of the Palestinian people seeking to establish an independent State on its territory and eliminate any likelihood of withdrawal from the occupied Arab territories, since Israel cares nothing for resolutions of international legitimacy and defies the entire international community, in particular the United Nations itself.

In the above-mentioned letter, Israel speaks of everything except the truth. Although it was responsible for killing and wounding innocent Lebanese civilians and destroying a number of homes belonging to Lebanese nationals in an incident that occurred on 21 January 2003, Israel blames the victims and those who defend them. Every time it address the issue of terrorism, Israel puts everyone else in the dock and presents its own behaviour — occupation, murders of innocent Arabs and destruction of their property — as being dictated by the needs of self-defence, whereas, in reality, it is the so-called acts of terrorism that are a defence against occupation, persecution, repression and racial discrimination.

The fact is that the Lebanese national resistance did not appear for no reason; it emerged as a response to the Israeli policy of occupation, murder and repression, which has been going on for more than 22 years. While welcoming certain resolutions adopted by the international community, Israel continues to pay no attention to an incalculable number of resolutions adopted by the Security Council, the General Assembly and the United Nations in general, and by other multilateral international political bodies, which ask Israel to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and respect international legitimacy.

Lebanon has responded to the Israeli allegations in numerous documents, in particular document A/56/1012-S/2002/829 dated 24 July 2002, in which it reaffirmed that Hezbollah's resistance was aimed at liberating the Lebanese territories still occupied by Israel and that it was responding to the violations of the

Blue Line which Israel committed daily by sending warplanes to overfly the entire Lebanese territory as a provocation. It is such acts that threaten peace and security in the region and that constitute a material breach of resolution 425 (1978), which Israel claims to apply.

It is ironic that Israel also refers in its letter to United Nations documents, since in all those documents the United Nations condemns Israel's practices and asks it to withdraw from the occupied Arab territories and to cease its aggression against the Palestinian, Lebanese and Syrian peoples. A mere perusal of these documents will demonstrate the truth of what we are saying.

Finally, Syria reaffirms the fact that, unlike Israel, it participates fully in international efforts to eliminate international terrorism. Syria cooperates with other countries and will continue to do everything in its power to help save innocent lives in responding to the genuine terrorism that threatens us all and the crimes against humanity committed by Israel.

(*Signed*) Mikhail **Wehbe**
Ambassador
Permanent Representative